

Canadian Shift among Filipino-Canadians in Metro Vancouver

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One of the hallmark features of Canadian English is the Canadian Shift (CS): the lowering and retracting of the front lax vowel system in response to the low-back vowel merger (Clarke, Elms & Youssef 1995). There have been many studies exploring this on- going change in Canada (e.g. Boberg 2005, 2008; Labov *et al.* 2006; Pappas & Jeffrey 2013), but many aspects are still inconclusive (e.g. Sadlier-Brown & Tamminga 2008), namely, the presence of /ɪ/-shifting, and the overall trajectories of the vowels (i.e. diagonal movement versus parallel retractions). More importantly, much of the data come from Anglo speakers thereby excluding other prominent groups in the community.

This presentation reports on an on-going study of CS within the context of second-generation Filipino-Canadians in Metro Vancouver. We addressed three research questions: (1) do they participate in CS? (2) If so, how advanced are they relative to Anglo speakers? (3) Finally, is gender a significant factor?

12 Filipino-Canadians (6 males and 6 females) who are native speakers of English between the ages of 19 and 30 were recruited. All of them have similar socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The data set was constructed from recordings of Boberg's (2008) word list during sociolinguistic interviews. F1 and F2 values were extracted and normalized for 248 tokens of /ɪ/ /ɛ/ /æ/ /o/ and /oh/. Results revealed that at least for this particular age group, CS is active in Vancouver, with evidence of diagonal movement: lowering and retracting of /ɪ/ /ɛ/ and /æ/. Furthermore, results indicated that compared to Anglo speakers (data taken from previous studies), Filipino-Canadians are more advanced – demonstrating more lowered and retracted variants. Finally, we found that women tend to lead the change in some properties of the shift.

The present study will attempt to explain these patterns by using the Emergent Market Model (Hall-Lew 2009).